

US Fish and Wildlife Service | Structured Decision Making_ Introduction

[INTRO PLAYING]

Welcome to an overview of Structured Decision Making. My name is Mike Runge. I work for US Geological Survey. I'm a research ecologist at the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center. And this course is a collaboration that has developed over a number of years. It's a Department of Interior collaboration. It was developed by folks at the National Conservation Training Center of Fish and Wildlife Service in West Virginia, in collaboration with a number of USGS research scientists. And is being produced here at the National Training Center for the Bureau of Land Management in Phoenix, Arizona.

This is a collaboration of a lot of people. And those acknowledgements are given in some of the online material that you've got. I want to particularly mention my co-presenter, Sarah Converse, who will be presenting some of these modules with me.

Why should you think about structured decision making? What are we trying to accomplish in this course? Sarah Converse, in the first module, module A, will give a thorough definition of what it is, and where it comes from, and what it can do for you.

But briefly, I think about structured decision making this way. As a scientist working for Department of Interior, my job is to provide the science that helps management agencies make decisions about conservation resources. So really, what conservation agencies are doing, what management agencies are doing, whether they're federal, state, or tribal, is making decisions.

And then when they make those decisions, they need to integrate the science that's available to them with the values, and the laws, and the policies that are important as part of their regulatory responsibility. So how do you bring those two things together? How do you bring the science together that fits with the policy, and values, and regulatory framework that's important?

Well there's a field of decision analysis. This field of decision analysis has existed for 30, 40, 50 years. It's developed in a lot of different areas from economics, to operations research, to risk analysis. And what we've done in this structured decision making idea is bring those tools of decision analysis to bear on conservation problems, thinking about how best to use them in the kind of settings that we find ourselves in as management agencies, as government management agencies.

How do we make good decisions? How do we make good decisions? How do we bring those pieces together? That's what this course is about. Now this course originally developed as a two-day in person course that was geared towards decision makers, managers, and their staff, the staff that would help them make these decisions. It's not very technical.

We have a longer five-day course that's developed for some of the technical aspects. This is meant to be an overview of structured decision making. To really touch on the key elements decision analysis and how they are brought together. And this course will have pointers to all the other technical aspects. So somebody can take this course and have a sense of where they might go to get more detailed information for those different pieces, and for the technical aspects.

How might you take this course? This course was originally developed as an in person course and has a lot of interactive components to it. In person there's a lot of conversation between the instructor and the students that are taking it. We're trying to duplicate a lot of that interaction in this online version. So you'll have before you the video segments that will have the pretenders presenting the material. You will have a notebook that you can download as separate PDFs for each of the modules.

And that notebook leads you through the material and allows you to have places to take notes. And they'll be places where we ask you to do some activities, to think about something, to jot down some ideas, to have a conversation perhaps with somebody in your office that you are taking this course alongside with.

And then we'll come back to the video segment and try to comment without actually being able to talk to you. But comment on some of the ideas of that activity. So there'll be a little bit back and forth. And you'll be asked to construct some of this knowledge yourself through some of the activities that we'll present you with.

[EXTRO PLAYING]